

**Project Title: CRACKING THE CODE: A CHECKLIST TO COMPLEMENT CRAS FOR FIRST YEAR JUSTICE STUDENTS**

**Funding Source:** QUT Learning and Teaching Grant Scheme  
 Priority Area: Understanding and addressing student retention and progression  
**Amount Funded (incl. in-kind):** \$11,400.00  
**Project timeline:** April 2012 – Nov 2013

**Research team:** Dr Carol Quadrelli and Ms Nancy Grevis-James, Prof. Belinda Carpenter (Research Mentor)

**CONTEXT:**

The research team noted a recognisable shift in the changing cohort of students and their understanding and engagement with feedback and CRAs, as well as variations in teaching staff expectations and student expectations. The reality of assessment feedback:

- CRAs are not always used consistently by staff (different marking styles and levels of feedback).
- Student support services might be recommended to students once a poor grade has been given. Students can perceive this as remedial and a further sense of failure.
- Limited opportunities for sessionals to access professional development to assist with engaging students and feedback.
- FYE resources exist, however academic time is a factor in exploring and embedding these resources.

**AIM & BROAD OBJECTIVES**

To develop a one page checklist/guide to be submitted with the CRA sheet and assessment piece. The checklist will:

- i) **provide an interface to engage first year Justice students and tutors in managing understandings and expectations around academic culture skills, and;**
- ii) **assist students to make links to relevant university services thereby promoting support services for students as normative, not remedial (Devlin, 2009).**

**METHODOLOGY**

This 18 month project consists of 6 phases.

**Phase 1** will include: a scan of existing resources and good practice, liaison with FY folk within QUT: SoJ FY Unit coordinators; and development of a draft checklist.

**Phase 2 Development:** seek feedback on checklist and refine for implementation in 1 x semester 2 unit, 2012; and, a UC and Tutors 'Checklist session' will be conducted early Semester 2.

**Phase 3 Implementation:** Trial checklist for assessment in one first year Justice unit, Semester 2, 2012; Develop basic survey to evaluate effectiveness of checklist in meeting project objectives (Student and academic perspectives to be canvassed pre and post use of checklist).

**Phase 4** replicates Phase 3 running in Semester 1, 2013.

**Phase 5 and 6** will consist of analysis and feedback gained from phases 1-4.

**ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES/ BENEFITS**

**streamlined** and **time** efficient tool; **consistency** in feedback; provides all students (of varying capacity) with summative feedback with no grade attached; useful for unit coordinators & tutor to **track** student **progress** in basic skills; checklist layout makes it easier for students to understand where they need to seek assistance; provides a focal point of discussion for tutors and students; reinforces skills & knowledge gained from unit Professional Criminological Research Skill & **demystifies** the CRA sheet for first year students.

#### Our Philosophy:

- Students understanding feedback is critical to academic development/progression
- Not intended to be an added work burden/ increased work load to academics
- Supporting students
- Encouraging student self-reflection
- Consistency across marking
- Addressing them and us
- Getting away from passive feedback, the Checklist gets the student to engage
- Putting the onus on students to engage and self-reflect
- Moving away from a stigma of bad mark
- We did not want a deficit approach (as discussed by Marcia Devlin)